



Air Force Research Laboratory
Directed Energy Directorate announces award winners

Quarterly award winners



Reservist of the Year

Maj. Darryl Sanchez, a physicist with the Air Force Research Laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate, was awarded the laboratory's Individual Mobilization Augmentee of the Year Award for 2002. Sanchez volunteered and served eight months active duty to work on the boost phase ballistic missile defense program with the Airborne Laser Technologies Branch. In his civilian capacity, he is a professor at the University of New Mexico.





Senior Scientist and Engineer
JAMES O'LOUGHLIN



Scientist and Engineer
DR. PETER MARDAHL



Senior Program Management
WESLEY TUCKER



Program Management
JUDITH MILLER



Leadership
DR. DIANA LOREE



Mission Support
SUSAN THORPE



Clerical
STACY GATLING



Director's Special Recognition
DR. PATRICIA SWANSON

Directorate presents medals, awards

One medal recipient, five annual award winners, 12 quarterly award winners, and one civilian honored for length of service were recognized at an Air Force Research Laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate ceremony.

A Meritorious Service Medal was awarded to Lt. Col. Mark R. Ackermann for outstanding service as chief, Mission Analysis, for the directorate's Starfire Optical Range.

David J. Luna was awarded the outstanding student employee of the year.

Dr. Lawrence A. Wright, Dr. Darryl J. Sanchez, and Lt. Larry Parten were awarded the 2002 Giller Award as the Airborne Laser Beam Control Simulation Team.

James P. O'Loughlin was awarded the 2002 Spark Award for his work in the High Power Microwave Division.

Dean I. Lawry, Jeffrey Burger, Dr. Don McLemore, John Aurand, Kenneth Murphy, Kelvin Lee, Dr. Gary Hoffer, Matthew Hought, Thomas Colina, Samuel Romero, Michael Abdalla, and Sean Ahern were recognized for winning the quarterly award technical teamwork category.

Dean I. Lawry was presented a certificate of service in recognition of 40 years of federal service.

Employer Support of the Guard, Reserve offers ombudsman services program

BY JENNIFER E. WEST
377th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

Members of the National Guard and Reserves have job protection to return to their civilian employment. Their jobs are protected by a federal act, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, USERRA, which ensures that men and women in military service are not penalized for serving their country.

The Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve Ombudsmen Services Program addresses conflicts or potential problems between employers and employees serving their country through the Guard or Reserve. The New Mexico Committee is headed by Normal Churchill, who oversees about 110 trained volunteers who administer the program in the state.

Because some employers don't understand the necessity of their employees serving in the Guard or Reserve since the establishment of the all-volunteer force, the organization responds to protect the jobs of those serving. Committee members provide information, counseling and informal mediation of issues relating to employers' compliance with USERRA. The success rate resolving conflicts is rated at 95 percent of all requests nationally. The majority of problems are cited as the result of poor communication between employer and employee or misunderstanding of rights and responsibilities as defined by the law.

The 1994 congressional act also protects those serving in the Public Health Service, the Coast Guard and others designated by the president in time of war or emergency.

With some exceptions, the law allows a five-year limit of cumulative time served in the military during which reemployment rights are in effect. And for pension benefit purposes, the employees' time away serving cannot be considered a break in employment and the time served is included as part of vesting and benefit accrual for the employee. The five-year total for time served excludes inactive duty and annual training, involuntary recall to or retention on active duty,

voluntary or involuntary active duty in support of a way, national emergency and certain operational missions, and certain additional training requirements.

Military members need only to provide their employers with notification of pending military service, rather than to request time off work, and should provide to employers Form DD-214, endorsed orders or a letter from the unit commander. Employers are always welcome to verify an employee's call to duty by contacting the military unit.

Employees should provide as much advance notice as possible, military necessity could preclude early notification. There is no differentiation between voluntary and involuntary service, and employees cannot be required to use their earned vacation or similar leave to serve their country.

Essentially, the USERRA protects service members' right to return to their civilian employment after completing military service with their seniority, status and pay rate reinstated. And, the act also is aimed at preventing discrimination in hiring, promotion or retention based on present or future membership in the armed services. No other law, policy or practice overrides or diminishes the protections of the act, which applies to businesses of all size. However, the act does not provide protection to independent contractors or those considered self-employed.

Reserve component members who experience employment problems caused by military obligations should first notify their commands. Locally, members can contact Churchill at 296-2556. In the event problems are not resolved locally, contact Ombudsmen Services at ESGR National Headquarters, 800-336-4590, or on the Internet at www.esgr.org. Situations beyond the scope of information resolution through the ombudsmen are immediately referred to the federal Department of Labor Veteran's Employment and Training Service, if necessary, are then referred to the federal Department of Justice.

Kirtland AFB firing ranges off limits

Areas that are off limits to all personnel at all times other than during official business and when cleared through the noncommissioned officer in charge of Combat Arms Training are:

★ The base firing range at 4000 South Gate Avenue, including the 300-yard Surface Danger Zone.

★ The Security Forces Special Weapons Range in Frustration Canyon, about two miles southeast of the Star Fire Optical Range in the Coyote Canyon area.

This includes the 4,300 meter Surface Danger Zone.

All entrances to these areas are marked with signs. An exact location of these areas can be found on maps in the Wing Safety office.

These areas are not for firing privately owned weapons and personnel illegally entering this area will be held liable for their actions.

Trespassing is extremely dangerous due to no-notice live firing and hazards inherent to ranges.

Access into these areas must be arranged through the base Combat Arms office at 846-6102 or 846-6440.